

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 HA-05 MCT-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01
PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13 /088 W
-----017102 010843Z /11
R 010735Z DEC 77
FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5675
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TEHRAN 10604

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4
TAGS: SHUM PINS IR
SUBJ: HUMAN RIGHTS: DISSIDENCE; POSSIBLE LINKS TO
TERRORISTS; MORE BACKGROUND ON RECENT DEMONSTRATIONS

REF TEHRAN 10428

1. SUMMARY: PRESS HAS REPORTED SOME INCIDENTS OF DISSIDENCE WHICH MAY NOT BE TRUE. LOWER-LEVEL RELIGIOUS FIGURES IN RECENT DEMONSTRATIONS INDICATE POSSIBLE LINKS BETWEEN COMMITTED OPPOSITIONISTS AND WINGS OF MUJAHIDIN AND CHARIK TERRORIST GROUPS. GERMAN EMBASSY REPORTS POLICEMAN ROUGHED UP AND PROFESSOR BEATEN. GOETHE SOCIETY CUTTING ITS CONTACTS WITH OPPOSITIONISTS IN WAKE OF BACKFIRE OVER POETRY READING. END SUMMARY.

2. BOTH FARSI AND ENGLISH PRESS NOVEMBER TWENTY-NINE CARRIED PARS NEWS AGENCY REPORTS OF DEMONSTRATIONS AND RIOTS IN ISFAHAN AND SHIRAZ. IN SHIRAZ, STORY INDICATED MULLAH TOLD A CONGREGATION OF ABOUT FIVE HUNDRED IN REZA MOSQUE THAT THERE WAS NO FREEDOM OF SPEECH IN IRAN. HE PRAYED FOR IMAM KHOMEINI SEVERAL TIMES AND REPORTEDLY ASKED THE CONGREGATION TO PRAY FOR THE VICTORY OF THE PALESTINIANS. ABOUT TWENTY OF HIS
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AUDIENCE THEN REPORTEDLY TOOK TO THE STREETS CHANTING PRO-KHOMEINI SLOGANS AND WERE DISPERSED BY POLICE. ABOUT THIRTY PEOPLE ALLEGEDLY DEMONSTRATED IN FRONT OF IRAN AIR OFFICE AND SMASHED WINDOWS WHILE ABOUT TWENTY OTHERS DID THE SAME TO TWO MOVIE HOUSES. IN ISFAHAN, SEVERAL UNKNOWN PEOPLE REPORTEDLY ATTACKED THE JEWISH SYNAGOGUE AT JUYABAREH AND SET FIRE TO

ITS CARPETS WITH GASOLINE.

3. ACCORDING TO LOCAL MEDIA MAN WHO WAS ON DUTY AT TIME, SAVAK ORDERED ABOVE STORY USED IN ALL NEWSPAPERS, BUT GAVE NO FURTHER DETAILS. PRESS STAFFS AT TWO PAPERS DUBIOUS. ISRAELI DIPLOMAT WAS ABLE TO CONFIRM BURNING OF CARPETS IN ISFAHAN SYNAGOGUE AND SAID GOI HAD APOLOGIZED FOR INCIDENT AND LINKED IT TO PRO-PLO SYMPATHIZERS AMONG FUNDAMENTALIST MOSLEMS. CONSULATE SHIRAZ HAS HEARD NOTHING ABOUT EVENTS REPORTED IN STORY, EVEN AFTER INQUIRY, AND CONSULATE ISFAHAN WAS NOT INFORMED ABOUT SYNAGOGUE INCIDENT DURING BRIEFING NOV 29. AS FAR AS WE KNOW, SYNAGOGUE INCIDENT WAS FIRST ANTI-SEMITIC EFFORT IN CURRENT DISTURBANCES. IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE THAT EVENTS REPORTED FROM SHIRAZ DID NOT HAPPEN EXACTLY AS DESCRIBED OR WERE SOMEHOW RELATED TO UNIVERSITY EVENTS REPORTED TEHRAN 10590.

4. IRANIAN NEWSMAN WITH GOOD CONNECTIONS TOLD EMBOFF NOVEMBER TWENTY-NINE THAT HE HAD SPOKEN WITH SOME LOWER-LEVEL RELIGIOUS FIGURES IN WAKE OF NOVEMBER TWENTY-ONE ARYAMEHR INCIDENT AND THEY TOLD HIM THERE WAS DEFINITE CONTACT BETWEEN MUJAHIDIN AND CHARIK TERRORISTS AND DEMONSTRATORS. SOURCE WNET ON TO SAY MUJAHIDIN HAD PLACED SEVERAL VEHICLES LOADED WITH MEN AND WEAPONS AT OUTER FRINGES OF ARYAMEHR COLLEGE WHO WERE READY TO RETURN FIR IF POLICE USED WEAPONS.
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SOURCE SAID ONE MULLAH HAD TOLD HIM THAT TERRORISTS WERE NOW GOING TO SKIP DIRECT VIOLENCE UNLESS ATTACKED AND WORK HARDER TO CULTIVATE POLITICAL "GRASS ROOTS" SUPPORT IN WAKE OF WHAT THEY CONSIDER POLARIZING EFFECT OF DEMONSTRATIONS AND POLICE REPRISALS OF PAST TWO WEEKS. MULLAH AND TWO OF HIS FRIENDS ALLEGEDLY CLAIMED GOAL OF ALL OPPOSITIONISTS IN IRAN NOW WAS TO LINE UP BEHIND MODERATE CONSTITUTIONALISTS AND PRESS FOR A WIDER SCOPE FOR POLITICAL ACTIVITY. SOURCE SAID HE THOUGHT HIS CONTACTS WERE SAYING WHAT THEY BELIVED TO BE TRUE, BUT MIGHT ONLY PARTIALLY REFLECT VIEWS OF TERRORIST LEADER-

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-----017203 010842Z /14

R 010735Z DEC 77
FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5676
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SHIP. SOURCE WAS NOT SURE HOW CLOSE HIS CONTACTS REALLY WERE TO "INNER GROUP" OF TERRORIST MOVEMENT, BUT SAID THIS SUBSTANTIATED RUMBLINGS FROM STUDENTS THAT TERRORISTS WERE BEGINNING TO WANT A PIECE OF THE ACTION. (EMBASSY COMMENT: WE HAVE NO INDEPENDENT VERIFICATION OF ABOVE, AND SOURCE (WHOSE RELATIONSHIP TO SAVAK IS NOT KNOWN) IS NOT ABOVE OCCASIONALLY SLANTING HIS STORIES TO WHAT HE BELIEVES IS LISTENER'S (AND PERHAPS GOI'S) BIAS. HOWEVER, SOMEWHAT SURPRISING LACK OF OVERT TERRORIST ACTIVITY OVER PAST MONTHS, PLUS PRESENCE OF AT LEAST SOME OPPOSITION INDIVIDUALS WITH KNOWN PAST LINKS TO GROUPS WITH TERRORIST CONTACTS AT KARAJ MEETING NOVEMBER TWENTY-TWO, SUGGESTS SOME POSSIBLE TRUTH IN ABOVE.)

5. IN COURSE OF GENERAL CONVERSATION NOVEMBER TWENTY-NINE, GERMAN DCM FILLED IN POL COUNS ON SOME DETAILS RELATING TO STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS PAST COUPLE OF WEEKS. HE MENTIONED THAT IRANAIN POLICEMAN MAY HAVE DIED OF INJURIES RECEIVED OUTSIDE LUFTHANSA OFFICE WHEN CROWD OF STUDENT DEMONSTRATORS MARCHING DOWN THE STREET RAN ACROSS HIM (ABOUT TEN DAYS AGO). THIS WAS DAY IN WHICH POLICE CHARGED MARCHING DEMONSTRATORS AND BROKE THEM UP WITH CONSIDERABLE INJURIES (TEHRAN CONFIDENTIAL

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10303). DEMONSTRATORS PREVENTED FIRST AMBULANCE FROM PICKING UP THE INJURED POLICEMAN, WHO WAS WITHOUT WALKIE-TALKIE OR ANY SUPPORT FROM OTHER POLICE, BUT MOB EVENTUALLY MOVED ON. GERMAN EMBASSY AT FIRST FEARED THIS WAS ATTACK CONNECTED WITH THREATS OF TERRORISTS IN GERMANY, AND CONTACTED IRANIAN AUTHORITIES FOR ADDITIONAL PROTECTION. WHILE PROTECTION ARRIVED ALMOST IMMEDIATELY, GERMANS SOON RELAIZED BLOODYING

OF POLICEMAN IN FRONT OF LUFTHANSA WAS COINCIDENTAL. HOWEVER, THEY HAVE BEEN ASSURED THAT POLICEMAN PRESENTLY IN FRONT OF LUFTHANSA OFFICE IS BEING SUPPORTED BY PLAINCLOTHES MEN IN VICINITY. HE HAD NOT HEARD REPORT THAT TWO POLICEMEN HAD BEEN KILLED (TEHRAN 10184 AND 10303).

6. AS INDICATION OF HIGH EMOTIONS INVOLVED, GERMAN TOLD US OF A 67-YEAR OLD PROFESSOR OF GERMAN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE AT TEHRAN UNIVERSITY WHO HAD POSITIONED HIMSELF BETWEEN GIRL STUDENTS AND POLICE WITH OUT-STRETCHED ARMS TRYING TO PROTECT GIRLS FROM POLICE ONRUSH WHEN THEY WERE BREAKING UP DEMONSTRATION THERE. HE WAS BEATEN DOWN AND IS AT PRESENT IN HOSPITAL WITH BROKEN COLLAR BONE. HE APPARENTLY IS NOT AND NEVER WAS MEMBER OF ANY OPPOSITION GROUP.

7. GERMAN NOTED THAT POETRY READING AT GOETHE INSTITUTE (TEHRAN 9 47) HAD AT LEAST TACIT ENDORSEMENT OF THE SHAHBANOU AS A LEGITIMATE CULTURAL ACTIVITY WHEN IT WAS FIRST PROPOSED, AND GERMAN AMBASSADOR AGREED TO IT. NUMBER OF PEOPLE THAT SHOWED UP FOR IT ROSE TO FIFTEEN THOUSAND AT ONE POINT WHICH OVERWHELMED
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LIMITED AREA OF THE INSTITUTE AND ALARMED GERMAN EMBASSY. GOETHE INSTITUTE DIRECTOR, WHO HAS HAD MANY CONTACTS WITH STUDENT AND OTHER OPPOSITIONISTS IN PAST, HAS INDICATED HE WILL DROP MOST OF THESE CONTACTS NOW SO AS TO AVOID STIGMATIZING THE INSTITUTE.

8. DECONTROL AFTER THIRTY YEARS.
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Message Attributes

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Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
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Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
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Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X4
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
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Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 TEHRAN 10428
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
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Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 109528
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: HUMAN RIGHTS: DISSIDENCE; POSSIBLE LINKS TO TERRORISTS; MORE BACKGROUND ON RECENT DEMONSTRATIONS
TAGS: SHUM, PINS, IR
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/11e7cefb-c188-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009